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Subs* 4. (Amended) A transaction validation system for auditing according to claim 3, wherein said system further includes means for generating a quotation coupled to said central processor arrangement.

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b1* 6. (Amended) A transaction validation system according to claim 5, wherein said system further includes means for processing transactions for each of said vendor and said subvendor, said processing transaction means coupled to said central processor arrangement.

7. (Amended) A transaction validation system according to claim 2, wherein said system further includes means for processing transactions for each of said vendor and said service provider, said processing transaction means coupled to said central processor arrangement.

Remarks

Favorable reconsideration of this application is requested in view of the following remarks. For the reasons set forth below, Applicant respectfully submits that the claimed invention is allowable over the cited references.

According to the December 9 Office Action, claims 1-13 and 16-22 stand “provisionally” rejected under 35 U.S.C. §101 for double patenting the “same invention” as that of claims 4-28 of copending Application No. 09/310,711 (USBA.005PA), and claims 14-15 stand “provisionally” rejected under 35 U.S.C. §101 for double patenting the “same invention” as that of claims 26-27 of copending Application No. 09/259,657 (USBA.002C1).

Applicant respectfully traverses the provisional rejection of claims 14-15 on the grounds that these respectively-cited sets of claims do not set forth the “same invention.” Careful review and comparison would reveal numerous differences. For example, claims 26-27 of copending Application No. 09/259,657 (USBA.002C1) refer to shipment transactions involving shippers and/or shipment carriers. Claims 14-15 of the instantly-claimed invention, however, do not use such terms and therefore bear a different claim scope. This provisional rejection of claims 14-15, therefore, should be removed.

With respect to the provisional rejection of claims 1-13 and 16-22 in view of claims 4-28 of copending Application No. 09/310,711 (USBA.005PA), Applicant has duly noted the

Examiner's provisional rejection and will proceed accordingly. However, these allegedly duplicative claims of the other pending cases have not yet been allowed. Pursuant to the guidelines set forth in the MPEP, because there are no additional rejections present, maintaining either of these provisional double patenting rejections is improper. As stated therein:

MPEP § 804

I. INSTANCES WHERE DOUBLE PATENTING ISSUE CAN BE RAISED

A. ***

B. Between Copending Applications-Provisional Rejections

The "provisional" double patenting rejection should continue to be made by the examiner in each application as long as there are conflicting claims in more than one application unless that "provisional" double patenting rejection is the only rejection remaining in one of the applications. If the "provisional" double patenting rejection in one application is the only rejection remaining in that application, the examiner should then withdraw that rejection and permit the application to issue as a patent, thereby converting the "provisional" double patenting rejection in the other application(s) into a double patenting rejection at the time the one application issues as a patent.

If the "provisional" double patenting rejections in both applications are the only rejections remaining in those applications, the examiner should then withdraw that rejection in one of the applications (e.g., the application with the earlier filing date) and permit the application to issue as a patent. The examiner should maintain the double patenting rejection in the other application as a "provisional" double patenting rejection which will be converted into a double patenting rejection when the one application issues as a patent.

Accordingly, Applicant would appropriately address the merits of such a rejection once the claims have been allowed in one or both of these other pending cases. Thus, upon notification of allowance of the claims of this application, the Applicant will appropriately address the provisional obviousness-type double patenting rejection.

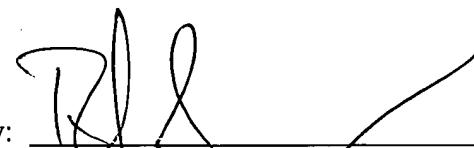
Applicant appreciates, and has noted, the suggestion that the rejection(s) can be overcome by canceling or amending any conflicting claims so they are no longer coextensive in scope.

In view of the above, Applicant submits that each of the claims is in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections, along with a favorable response, are earnestly requested.

If appropriate, please charge charge/credit Deposit Account No. 50-0996 (USBA.004PA) should there by any deficient amount due or any overage payment.

Should there be any remaining issues that could be readily addressed over the telephone, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned at 651/686-6633.

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CLAIMS SECTION SHOWING MARKED UP CHANGES (09/527,717)

1. *(No change)* For transaction processing involving transaction information related to services provided by one of a plurality of vendors and processed by one of a plurality of service providers, a transaction validation system for auditing comprising: a central processor arrangement programmed and configured to maintain data relation to an authorized profile list criterion that includes information about authorized users empowered to authorize payment by the vendor, and programmed and configured to process the transaction information by determining whether the transaction information satisfies the authorized profile list criterion, and using the authorized profile list criterion to generate information for auditing a transaction between said one of a plurality of vendors and said one of a plurality of service providers.
2. (Amended) A transaction validation system for auditing according to claim 1, wherein said system further includes [a] means for generating a quotation coupled to said central processor arrangement.
3. *(No change)* For transaction processing involving transaction information related to services provided by a vendor, said transaction information initially being generated by one of a plurality of services providers prior to processing by said vendor, a transaction validation system for auditing comprising: a central processor arrangement programmed and configured to maintain data relating to an authorized profile list criterion that includes information about authorized users empowered to authorize payment by the vendor to the service provider, and programmed and configured to process the transaction information by determining whether the transaction information satisfies the authorized profile list criterion, and using the authorized profile list criterion to generate information for auditing a transaction between said vendor and said one of a plurality of service providers.
4. (Amended) A transaction validation system for auditing according to claim 3, wherein said system further includes [a] means for generating a quotation coupled to said central processor arrangement.

5. (*No change*) A transaction processing involving transaction information related to services provided by a vendor and a plurality of subvendors and processed by one of a plurality of subvendor controlled service providers, a transaction validation system for auditing comprising: a central processor arrangement programmed and configured to maintain data relating to an authorized profile list criterion that includes information about authorized users empowered to authorize payment by the vendor and subvendors, and programmed and configured to process the transaction information by determining whether the transaction information satisfies the authorized profile list criterion, and using the authorized profile list criterion to generate information for auditing a transaction between said vendor and both of said plurality of subvendors and said plurality of subvendor controlled service providers.

6. (Amended) A transaction validation system according to claim 5, wherein said system further includes [a] means for processing transactions for each of said vendor and said subvendor, said processing transaction means coupled to said central processor arrangement.

7. (Amended) A transaction validation system according to claim 2, wherein said system further includes [a] means for processing transactions for each of said vendor and said service provider, said processing transaction means coupled to said central processor arrangement.

8. (*No change*) A transaction validation system according to claim 8, wherein said processing transaction means is accessible remotely.

9. (*No change*) A transaction processing system involving transaction information related to services provided from one of a plurality of vendors and processed by one of a plurality of service providers, a method for validating a service transaction for auditing comprising:

generating transaction information prior to processing by vendor;

providing an authorized profile list criterion that includes information about authorized users empowered to authorize payment by the vendor;

using a computer arrangement, maintaining data relating to the authorized

profile list criterion and processing the transaction information by determining whether the transaction information satisfies the authorized profile list criterion, and by using the authorized profile list criterion to generate information for auditing a transaction between said one of a plurality of vendors and said one of a plurality of service providers.

10. *(No change)* A method for validating a service transaction, according to claim 9, further including sending service-related information from an external device and generating a set of transaction information therefrom.

11. *(No change)* A method for validating a service transaction, according to claim 10, further including informing the computer arrangement of provision of the service by the service providers, and using the computer arrangement to audit the service transaction and payment thereof in response to the transaction information and the authorized profile list criterion.

12. *(No change)* The method according to claim 9, further including communicating service related information to said computer arrangement from remote location.

13. *(No change)* For transaction processing involving transaction information related to services provided from a vendor and one of plurality of subvendors and processed by one of a plurality of subvendor controlled service providers, a method for validating a service transaction for auditing comprising:

generating transaction information prior to processing by subvendor;

providing an authorized profiel list criterion that includes information about authorized users empowered to authorize payment by the vendor; and

using a computer arrangement, maintaining data relating to the authorized profile list criterion and processing the transaction information by determining whether the transaction information satisfies the authorized profile list criterion, and by using the authorized profile list criterion to generate information for auditing a transaction between said one of a plurality of vendors and said one of a plurality of service providers.

14. (*No change*) A system for billing a vendor and subvendor, and paying a service provider and a subvendor for a completed service-related transaction, comprising:

means for receiving a set of transaction information including the cost of service from a central processor arrangement; and

means for processing a credit account for the vendor, for verifying that the vendor has sufficient credit to fund the cost of service, for indicating when the account for the vendor should be debited, and for indicating when payment to the service provider and subvendor should be tendered, and for notifying a financial institution the cost of service.

15. (*No change*) A method for billing a vendor and subvendor, and paying a service provider and a subvendor for a completed service-related transaction, comprising:

receiving a set of transaction information including the cost of service from a central processor arrangement; and

using a computer arrangement for processing a credit account for the vendor, for verifying that the vendor has sufficient credit to fund the cost of service, for indicating when the account for the vendor should be debited, for indicating when payment to the service provider and subvendor should be tendered, and for notifying a financial institution of the cost of the service.

16. (*No change*) For transaction processing involving transaction information related to services provided by one of a plurality of vendors and processed by one of a plurality of service providers, a transaction validation system for auditing comprising:

a central processor arrangement programmed and configured:

to maintain data relating to an authorized profile list criterion and to business rules, the business rules defined according to the authorized profile list criterion; and

to process a business transaction submitted by an authorized user, the business transaction processed by using the authorized profile list criterion to determine that the user is authorized to perform the business transaction and by applying the business rules to perform the business transaction.

17. (*No change*) A transaction validation system for auditing, according to claim 16, wherein the authorized profile list criterion includes multiple levels of authorization.

18. (*No change*) A transaction validation system for auditing, according to claim 17, wherein at least two of the multiple levels of authorization respectively correspond to two different payment-authorization levels.

19. (*No change*) A transaction validation system for auditing, according to claim 17, wherein the central processor arrangement is further programmed and configured to provide correspondence between at least one of the levels of authorization to the requested transaction.

20. (*No change*) A transaction validation system for auditing according to claim 16, wherein the transaction is completed after correspondence is provided between at least one of the levels of authorization and the requested transaction.

21. (*No change*) A transaction validation system for auditing according to claim 16, wherein the authorized profile list criterion includes a plurality of attributes associated with the authorized user submitting the business transaction.

22. (*No change*) A transaction validation system for auditing according to claim 1, wherein the authorized profile list criterion includes a plurality of attributes associated with the authorized user submitting the business transaction.